come to a standstill due to shortage of funds. With the beginning of the month of February, the frequency of water supply in the pipes goes down to once in two or three days. In many wards of the city, the water pipes are completely dry. The city continues to suffer this trauma untill July. The execution of Rajghat Project stands postponed. According to newspaper reports, the Project Division set up for Rajghat Dam Project is proposed to be shifted to Guna. If this project is shifted outside Sagar, it will adversely affect the ongoing drinking water project for Sagar city and further aggravate the problems of the people. I, therefore, earnestly request the Central Government to take over this project to provide adequate funds to the State Government under a special scheme so that the people of sagar may get relief from the problem of drinking water.

(iii) Need to Dispense with 'Users Charge' being Levied on Passengers Going Abroad from Calicut Airport

[English]

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN (Cannanore): Sir, it is highly essential that the users charge being levied upon passengers going abroad from Calicut Airport be discontinued without further delay in order to ensure justice and equal treatment to such passengers.

The users' charge of Rs. 500/- per head on both tickets of adults and children is being levied on all passengers going abroad from Calicut Airport since October, 1995. At that time, objections to such a discriminatory charge was overcome with an assurance that the charge would be levied only over a period of six months. However, in spite of this assurance, the charge is still being levied and is a big burden upon all passengers going abroad and especially those travelling with family.

This charge is in addition to the Rs. 300/- per head by way of foreign travel tax.

Many passengers even from the Northern Districts of Kerala are, therefore, forced to take flights from Trivandrum where no such charge is being levied. The passengers are deeply agitated over this indiscriminate charge and I seek the intervention of the hon. Minister for Civil Aviation to ensure early discontinuation of such a levy. Thank you.

(iv) Need for Construction of Sluice Gates to Check Fresh Floods in Katihar District, Bihar

SHRI TARIQ ANWAR (Katihar): Sir, under the Master Plan, Water Resources Department in 1974 had constructed the Mahananda embankment to stop the floods originating from the rivers like Ganga, Mahananda and Koshi entering the Katihar district. But the embankment proved to be a curse rather than a boon as it created more serious problems for the farmers of the district. The land on which the embankment was constructed accumulated fresh floods. With the result, thousands of acres of land could not be cultivated and the farmers had to flee to other districts for work.

To clear the fresh flood waters, it was decided to construct Sluice Gates in Manihari, Amdabad, Azamnagar, Pranpur etc. but the State Government has not been able to construct the Gates. I, therefore, urge upon the Central Government to take up the urgent steps for the construction of Sluice Gates at the required places in Katihar district.

(v) Need to improve the Functioning of Telephones in Rural Areas of Tiruppattur Parliamentary Constituency, Tamil Nadu

[Translation]

SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (Tiruppattur): In the past few years, through certain Technology Missions, an impetus was intended to be given to provide telecommunication facilities etc. in rural areas. But the availability of modern communication facilities is still eluding the rural areas. The avowed policy of the Ministry of Communications is to link all the villages of the country by way of providing them with telephone connections. At this juncture, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government the sorry plight of certain rural telephone exchanges in my constituency. Improvisation and modernisation of already existing rural telephone exchanges should be given priority. The rural telephone exchanges in Northampoondi, Vettavalam, Thandarampattu, Vanapuram, Mallavadi and Veraiyur are at a distance of 15 to 20 Kms. around Thiruvannamalai. Most of these exchanges often meet with service shut-downs due to poor maintenance and obsolete equipment. Many surrounding villages get connected to these exchanges and the telephone link is often found disrupted. Apart from that, a good number of villagers of this area are waiting for long to get telephone connections. The same is the case with rural areas around Tiruppattur town. This industrially backward, agricultural area has sparsely located units of leather industry. So, this area must have improvised communication network to grow and prosper along with other parts of the country. I request the Central Government to take up modernisation work at the earliest in the rural telephone exchanges in Tiruppattur constituency.

(vi) Need to Take Effective measures to Check Sea Erosion in Sunderbans, West Bengal

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (Joynagar): Sunderbans area, though rich in flora and fauna and renowned for its Tiger Project, its people are extremely poverty-ridden; there being no industry or even any agricultural activity—as it is very marshy and is a constant

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

victim of vagaries of weather—worst of all the high tidal waves from the Bay of Bengal eroding the embankments of its rivulets measuring about 3500 Kms. and rendering the land unfit for any worthwhile agricultural cropping. The only solution is to further strengthen the embankments of its rivulets so that these can stand the crushing tidal waves. For this, some Dutch experts are needed from Holland, as that country has got expertise in countering the impact of devastating tidal waves and for that I would appeal to the Central Government to get into touch with the Dutch Government and secure the services of some experts from there to meet this threat to this poor land. It may be stated that the West Bengal Government is itself in the throes of acute financial crunch and are thus unable to spare any money for this enterprise. It is the Government of India, which can really help the poor people of Sunderbans area and save it from further ruination by the tidal waves, which at times claim some precious human lives also; apart from causing large-scale erosion of the soil, which can be very usefully utilised.

(vii) Need to Provide LPG Connections on Demand to the Consumers of Dakshina Kanada and Kodagu Districts in Karnataka

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR (Mangalore): Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu Districts in Karnataka State stretching north to south in between the Arabian Sea and Western Ghats, has been maintaining perfect ecological balance with its rich green forestry. Due to the recent decision of successive State and Central Governments for granting permission for setting up a number of industries in this area, the people are facing the hazard of environmental pollution. Now it has become incumbent on the people not to cut any more fire wood for the fuel purposes.

The people of this region are becoming more and more dependent on LPG for domestic cooking purposes. But the LPG has become a scarce commodity with limited supply outlets. A large number of consumers are waiting for more than five years to get an LPG connection.

In the interest of maintaining the ecological balance of the region and also to meet the greater demand for LPG connection, I request the Government of India to extend the benefit of granting immediate LPG connections to every consumer on demand, in this region, as has been done in the hilly regions elsewhere in the country.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned for lunch to meet at 2.35 p.m.

13.33 hours

[The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till Thirty-five Minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.]

14.41 hours

[The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at Forty-one Minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.]

(MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (AMENDMENT) BILL

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House shall now take up further consideration of the Bill moved by Shri Ramakant D. Khalap on the 26th July, 1996. The time allotted for this Bill is one hour. The balance is 30 minutes.

SHRI RAM NAIK (Mumbai North): The discussion has not yet started on this.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I think it had commenced. At least five persons have already spoken on this and thirty minutes has already been spent. Shri Bhagwan Shankar Rawat, Shri Satya Pal Jain, Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar have all spoken.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh); What happened was that when it was taken up for consideration, we spoke on that and then the consideration was deferred. At that time they withdrew from the discussion saying that they would like to bring forward an amended Bill.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): There was a demand that the Schedule be further amended to include Gram Panchayats in the case of Karnataka. This was the suggestion of certain Members. So we decided to ponder over this issue afresh. Accordingly the debate was adjourned on that issue. We have now come back with an official amendment that Gram Panchayats are also to be included in the Schedule relating to Karnataka. This is in deference to the wishes of the Members from Karnataka.

SHRI RAM NAIK: There may not be many speakers. Each Member will try to complete his speech within five minutes. We would not take much time.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN: Last time two points were raised. They have accepted one point. Another point was—he was here on that day—the MPs and MLAs are ex-officio members of Municipal and Cantonment Boards. The point raised was that by virtue of their being